



# Indian Journal of Theology

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F. Mulyil : The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel

M. E. Gibbs : Christianity as a Historical Religion

Peter May : Towards a Biblical Theology of Mission

### *Review Article*

K. Anand : The Call of the Minaret

### *Book Reviews*

C. A. Simpson : Composition of the Book of Judges

M. E. Thrall : The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood

M. B. Reckitt : Militant Hera in Earth

G. MacGregor : The Vatican Revolution

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# THE INDIAN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

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## *Editorial Note*

We have to announce that the Rev. Canon Peter May is obliged to relinquish the post of Joint Editor of the *Journal* as from the beginning of 1959 on account of his retirement from missionary service in India. He has served the *Journal* most ably and efficiently as Editor and as Secretary of the Editorial Board over the last four years. On behalf of the readers of the *Journal* we thank Canon May for his services and wish him Godspeed in his work in England.

The Rev. A. C. M. Hargreaves of Bishop's College has been appointed Editor in the place of Canon May, and we take this opportunity to welcome him to this position.

# The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel

F. MULIYIL

That the Fourth Gospel is an avowedly theological work is generally admitted. The author himself states his purpose in these words :

‘ But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye may have life in His name.’

To describe it thus does not imply that the Synoptic gospels in contrast are merely historical and quite innocent of theology ! The gospels are not imitations of Greek histories or biographies. The underlying motives and presuppositions of the writers of the New Testament are the same whatever the type of the book—history, biography, epistle, apocalypse or tract, which together compose the Canon of the New Testament. There is a unity in the New Testament which is original, underlying the diversity of the individual writings which must not be overlooked in analytical and critical study of each part—Dr. C. H. Dodd, in his inaugural lecture in Cambridge, said as long ago as 1936, ‘ The Fourth Gospel may well prove to be the keystone of an arch which at present fails to hold together. If we can understand it, understand how it came to be, and what it means, we shall know what early Christianity really was and not until in some measure we comprehend the New Testament as a whole, shall we be in a position to solve the Johannine Problem.’

And what is the ‘ Johannine Problem ’ ? To the ordinary reader it consists in the contrast the gospel presents to the first three gospels, called the Synoptic gospels. Is the Fourth Gospel an historical chronological narrative of the ministry of Jesus with theological material interwoven with it or is it a series of theological expositions and the historical material merely editorial or redactional ; which is primary and which is secondary ? The controversy raged over the question of the historicity of the Fourth Gospel, and reached a stalemate in the conclusion that the Fourth Gospel represented a tradition, independent of the Synoptic history, or as supplementing it.

Albert Schweitzer has said that the “ quest of the historical Jesus ” is a vain quest’. His book of the same title was in many

ways an epoch-making one. It was a protest against the 'historicism' that beset all piecemeal study of the books of the New Testament. Such studies offered nothing but contrasts and obscured the unity of the New Testament. This in turn made interpretation difficult and subjective, and often fanciful. If we eschewed the allegorical method of a previous age, these studies introduced another kind of allegory, the idealism and humanitarianism of the modern age which it was assumed that the New Testament writings anticipated and prefigured. In this pre-occupation their real affinities with the Old Testament history and religion were overlooked, and the associations of the Greek environment of early Christianity exaggerated; and this affected adversely all attempts at interpretation.

The problem of the Fourth Gospel is a characteristic problem of our times. The Synoptic gospels contained the ethical teaching of our Lord which could be adapted to the outlook of the present age and could be made to buttress modern humanism. The apocalyptic elements in them (which are alien to our ways of thought) could be written off as outmoded trappings, or contemporary associations not integrally related to the permanent message of the gospel. The Kingdom of God which is the gospel of Jesus was often allied with an implicit belief in progress. So understood, the Kingdom of God stood out of all relation to other ideas of the New Testament such as eternal life, redemption, judgment, but in actual fact all these ideas form a coherent whole, and none of them can be detached from the others. A selective use of the ideas of the New Testament is denied to us. We cannot choose from the New Testament what we want and reject the rest, as a Hindu feels free to do, and considers a quite legitimate procedure. We are committed to it entire, and in all honesty we must persevere till we discover its inner unity.

Perhaps this statement of the problem is quite modern. But that was not how it was posed in the first and second centuries of the Christian era. The social gospel was not the demand of the age. It was the cosmic gospel. The gnostics were the pioneers in this type of interpretation and the Christian gnostics tried to fit Christ into their cosmological speculations. The result was that Christ became a principle or one of the principles in their schemes of the universe. Such schematizations have little correspondence to history and the actual life of men in the world. The Fourth Gospel reflects this tendency of thought, not in the sense that it emulates it but that it raises a protest against it. Though the prologue might at first mislead the reader, this misconception only relates to the word *Logos* which is abandoned after the momentous statement 'the Word became flesh', and from henceforth, the author is concerned with the 'flesh of the Son of man', which worked redemptively for all mankind. Unlike the gnostics the author does not define Christ in terms of the *logos*, but the *logos* in terms of Christ. In other words he subordinates all cosmology to a soteriology and states that to impart

life to man is the purpose of God, from creation to the end of time. Herein is seen that though Greek thought was a potent environment of the Fourth Evangelist, it did not in any way modify the content of his message to his times.

There was still another element of current thought which is distinct from the cosmological speculations of the Hellenistic culture. That is represented by the Mystery Religions which came from the East. The allegorical method relates to rationalistic speculations as the writings of Philo abundantly testify. On the other hand sacramental acts and mystic symbolism are the language of Mystery Religions. Moreover they were all concerned with the salvation of the individual and his life in a community of the initiated or of the Sect. At first Christianity appeared to be one of the competing cults. But what distinguished it from the rest would certainly constitute one of the essential principles of the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel.

What prevented the Fourth Gospel from being depressed into a cultic book is its vital connection with history and particularly with the history of Israel. The author is conversant with the older apologetic, the gospel as the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets.

‘We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’

‘We worship that which we know: for salvation is from the Jews.’

It is a vindication of the faith of Israel. The history of Israel could only have such a conclusion, for it is a history compounded of faith and fact. The history itself illustrates this faith, and it is made by the people who held the faith. It is no use asking which is antecedent, the history or the faith. To explain faith as a rationalistic or pietistic interpretation of facts is to put asunder what God has joined together.

All the key words which belonged to the vocabulary of mystery cults are used in the Fourth Gospel, knowledge, light, life, fullness, but they are employed, not to describe the inner illumination of the devotee or the believer, but of a person. He is the light of the world, he gives the living bread, and the water that springs up unto eternal life.

It has been said that the Fourth Gospel is the sacramental gospel, but it enshrines the sacrament of history and not a nature myth. The initiation is not into the mysteries of Nature but into the life of the historical person Jesus Christ, who is prefigured in the story of the people of Israel, beginning with the great patriarch Jacob, the gift of manna the miraculous food, the giving of the Law, the building of the temple. Indeed the book abounds in allusions to the history and institutions of the people of Israel, a concrete history which is the sacrament of the Kingdom of God. The greatest praise our Lord can give to one who lived in this

sacred tradition is contained in the words spoken about Nathanael, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!' and it is assumed that a true Israelite recognizes in Him the 'Son of God' and the 'King of Israel'.

All these lead to one great axiom, in the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel. The contrast between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel is only superficial, but the inner unity between them is of fundamental importance. In fact the writer shows clear evidences of his knowledge of the Synoptic tradition, but gives that tradition a universal setting by linking the *eschaton* with the creation itself. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' . . . 'And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.' The problem of the gospel is not that of the historicity of the narrative or the discourses. It is the problem of history, of the meaning of the story of man upon the earth.

If the sacred history of the Old Testament is an essential part of the assumptions of the writer, it would seem rather promiscuous that commentators should draw upon Rabbinic commentaries on the Old Testament books to throw additional light on Johannine discourses. It is true that a knowledge of the Rabbinic interpretations of the Scriptures has greatly enhanced our understanding of the gospels. But St. John's method could hardly be described as Rabbinic, nor the Johannine discourses be compared with Rabbinic expositions. The book is not a commentary on the basic text of the Synoptics, but the same story told in a wider context. The writers of the Synoptic gospels give the warning 'that Jesus taught with *authority* and not as their Scribes'. The Rabbinic commentaries are didactic and often contain fanciful exegesis, and unlike the Fourth Gospel they do not have an historical or missionary purpose. The avowed aim of the writer is evangelistic, and one should like to think of him—seminar though his writings are for theology—primarily as an *evangelist*.

The gospel presents a problem not generally envisaged by Western commentators. It is that the gospel is not considered to be a problem in India at all. The Johannine contrast between faith and unbelief disappears completely if the Fourth Gospel is understood as depicting the inner consciousness of Christ, His oneness with the Father, which to the Jews appeared to be blasphemous claim. Read the gospel against the background of the acosmic monism of the Vedantic philosophy, which is basic to all Hindu and Buddhist religious thought, and the challenge which the gospel presents to faith fades away. This indeed is a missionary problem and I must confess it is hard to find an answer. To the Hindu, Nature, Man and God belong to the one large landscape of religion, and the ascent from one to the other is logical, but of a descent we do not hear, except in the salvation myths of Saivism and Vaishnavism, which in themselves were protests against the rarefied intellectualism of the Vedanta. Th-

Hindu might claim that the Fourth Gospel is but another illustration of the Vedantic thesis of an ultimate identity of *Atman* and *Brahman*, the individual soul and the universal soul, as a conscious experience of the individual, and he maintains that his philosophy comprehends all scriptures (Vedas) even the Christian Book.

Perhaps an answer to the missionary problem could be found in the study of the Fourth Gospel against the Hellenistic environment, especially in the contrast it presents to the current views, of a fault in the universe or of the imprisoned fragment of the '*pleroma*', the spark of the divine light in its material habitation finding its way back through successive stages to its source. The gospel affirms categorically, 'No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' Or again, 'And no man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.' There was a descent, an Incarnation, and all creation, all human longing and aspiration, all history, even the Sacred history, and all Scriptures are brought within its sphere. 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day ; and he saw it, and was glad.'

Faith, which is the characteristic religious response of man, is not an attitude, or quality of the soul, but a venture to believe in God, and directed not towards an idea or an abstraction, a thought or a conception, but to an object outside him, even the person of Christ. For the Christian, Christ fills the universe—this is the purpose of beginning the gospel not at a point of time within history, but 'in the beginning' where our categories of time are transcended. What happened at the incarnation was not a product of human history, but something that created human history and renews it. The story of man properly understood has a beginning and an end, both outside the temporal sphere in which he lives. To apprehend logos in its historical setting is to know life in the sphere of the 'eternal' here and now.

The Hindu, instead of concentrating on the inner experience of the Master, might shift his attention to the devotion of the 'Beloved Disciple', and regard the gospel as an illustration or exposition of Christian piety. This is an aspect of the gospel which has a universal appeal. The promises of Christ to enlighten the individual, to allay his thirst with 'living water', and to satiate his hunger with the 'bread of life', to care for him as the shepherd, to sustain him as the vine sustains the branch, might all be construed as describing the mystical relations between the deity and the worshipper. Bhakti is the Indian word for it. Bhakti religions in India, with their intense longing for release, have been acclaimed as an alternative *marga* (path) to the deity, who is the personification (incarnation!) of the universal soul. It is here the Indian commentators of the Fourth Gospel have found the nearest approach to the Hindu. Christian

Bhakti might offer a parallel, but as parallels they never meet or do they meet in infinity?

It has always made me uneasy when faith which Jesus demands from his disciples (as well as from all men) is translated by the word Bhakti. They do not belong to the same complex of ideas. The former belong to the realm of history and the latter to that of religious consciousness. Bhakti religions usually avoid the challenge which the 'Word of God' presents to faith. There is a Christian mysticism, but it has always followed the acceptance of Jesus' claim to reveal the Father and His victory over the world, sin and death. Therefore Bhakti religions have always tended towards the sect type of religion and to cultic practices. They have no message of hope for a fallen world.

There are several 'devotional' commentaries on the Fourth Gospel. They do give to the Christian the certainty of the things which he has believed and help to foster personal religion and a life of devotion, but rarely if ever succeed in interpreting the gospel as a missionary book, written by an evangelist for the world of his day.

The great majority of people, then as now, are not pre-occupied with religions or ideas. They are frankly secularists. If in modern times the gospel has been presented in the context of an existentialist philosophy which I personally think promises to be a fruitful method of interpretation, one must also remember that there is an atheistic existentialism. Communism purports to be such an ideology. The Fourth Gospel does not evade the issue. The Galilean crowd typifies this vast number who seek 'perishing bread' and Jesus' rebuke is as relevant today as it was then. 'You seek perishing bread, I am the bread of life.'

The fundamental problem of the 'Fourth Gospel' then is the problem of history. It is an attempt to show the gospel as relevant to the life of man on earth, but it is a life not produced by or confined to man's long existence upon the earth. It comes 'from above' and is consummated in the sphere from which it came. But it comes within our experience in the movement of history, both changing us and our times, shaping us and the world after the pattern of a divine history that is at the same time an theodicy, a vindication of God's ways with men. The earthly life of Christ is an epitome of the whole life of man, in the sphere of God. No part of human life and experience, not even pain and suffering is left out so that the moment of his death becomes at the same time the 'hour' of 'glorification'. Jesus is indeed the Lord of life.

Now the basis of all this is the story of the Son of Man, the earthly life of our Lord, and all that followed therefrom. Hence the first need in a commentary is to stick close to history and make the text of the gospel and its meaning as clear as possible. The book under consideration in this article (*The Gospel According to St. John*, C. K. Barrett, S.P.C.K., 63s.) fulfils that task honestly. It is conservative on the whole, but that is not a fault but an

excellence. There is a modicum of introductory material which embodies all that is significant in recent researches into the environment of the gospel in contemporary thought. Old Testament, Judaism, Greek Philosophy and religions of salvation form its non-Christian background and the short paragraphs dealing with them are both clear and apt. There is little tendency to speculation, for the gospel compels one to listen to the words of our Lord, and ponder over the events which the Evangelist describes. The questions that naturally arise in the mind of an evangelist in a non-Christian land are not given much prominence, since that is not the milieu of the present commentator. But the reader can draw the parallels from what has been set forth in the introduction which is both succinct and suggestive. The Christian background of the gospel is then described. The author illustrates the correspondence between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic gospels, St. Paul's letters, and the rest of the Johannine writings. The commentator has shown a sure perception of the unity of the New Testament and of its vital connection with the life of the early Christian Community. 'It is of supreme importance to John', he says, 'that there was a Jesus of Nazareth who lived and died in Palestine; but to give an accurate outline of the outstanding events of the career of this person was no part of his purpose.' The Fourth Gospel, though not widely known or fully understood, nevertheless belonged to the living tradition and history of the early Church.

The section closes with an essay on the influence of the gospel upon the development of theology. The author traces it in the later writings of the New Testament Canon as well as in the early apologists. He says, 'the influence of John in the first half of the second century may perhaps seem far less substantial than might be expected. The reason for this is partly that the gospel remained to a great extent unknown; it did not enter the main stream of the Church's life till later in the century. But it remains a striking fact that the Christian writers of this period were able to handle the problems, which evoked the Fourth Gospel, and yet show no indication that they were aware of the immense and unique contribution John had made to their solution... No Christian thinker before Irenaeus was capable of appropriating and interpreting the Johannine synthesis'.

The section on the 'Theology of the Gospel' is the most important part of the whole book, apart from the commentary. The writer proves with supporting texts from the gospel, and from the New Testament generally, his thesis that 'Johannine theology is not so much the imposition of alien forms and terminology upon primitive Christian thought (though it is expressed partly in new forms and terminology), as the spontaneous development of primitive Christian thought, under the pressure of inner necessity and the lapse of time'. The author does not generally favour the view that John is primarily a mystic, and the gospel as illustrating the mystic experiences of the 'Beloved Disciple',

and this is to his credit. He says, 'For many reasons it is impossible to classify John with the mystics of his age or of any age... John knows no special class of "mystic" Christians any more than he knows a special class of "gnostic" Christians. The state which is described in this semi-mystic terminology is simply the state of Christian salvation perhaps most simply represented by ἐνεφύσησεν of 20, 22. Jesus sends his apostles as he has himself been sent by his Father; he breathes into them the Spirit that had rested upon him'. The Introduction closes with an essay on the origin and authority of the gospel. 'It seems right', says the author, 'to emphasize a certain detachment of the gospel from its immediate surroundings; no book ever was less a party tract than John'. This detachment must have puzzled both the Churchmen and the heretics, but they dare not take any liberties with it. The historical core of the book impressed the Christian and resisted all attempts of the speculative philosopher to etherealize it. Our author says, 'From one point of view John is a reaffirmation of history. Both apocalypticism and gnosticism may be regarded as a flight from history. The apocalypticist escapes from the past and the present and enters into a golden age of the future; the gnostic escapes from the past and present into a world of mysticism and fantasy. Over against these John asserted the primacy of history'. One can trace Bultmann's influence in this chapter of an existentialist interpretation of the gospel.

The commentary itself is most carefully written. It is based on the Greek text and fulfils a need that has been keenly felt for a long time, since the publication of Bernard in the I.C.C. over thirty years ago. It is compendious in character and gives all the important variants of the text, and takes note of the significant differences in exegesis, and yet it is not a reference book. The author succeeds to a remarkable extent in recapturing the impression which the words of Jesus made on the original hearers. 'The person of Christ', which is central in the gospel, stands in sharp relief against his times as he does against the modern age. The indexes are exhaustive and there are quite a number of them ranging from Old Testament to modern authors, books and periodicals. One is impressed by the painstaking care, devotion and the wide reading and study that have gone into the writing of this book.

It is said that one may not write a commentary on St. John before one is fifty. But longevity does not always presuppose wisdom. Nevertheless a certain detachment (not withdrawal) which comes with age is necessary to understand a mind so mellowed, and a character so gracious as that of the 'Beloved Disciple'. A commentator is necessarily circumscribed by his environment and it is only by an effort of imagination that he can transport himself to far-off times and climes. What would be the specific needs of India or other lands in the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel may be outside his scope. The present exposition has relevance in the context of the Christian Church and the

culture of the West. A transposition of the gospel of 'eternal life' is the continuing task of the Christian evangelist in every land and generation. A whole lifetime is hardly sufficient to understand and appropriate the 'Words of Life' which our Lord spoke even as the Evangelist adds in his post-script, 'the world itself would not contain the books that should be written' on the theme.



(From *The Suffering God*, by C. S. Paul, published by C.L.S., Madras, 1932.)

*When a man is battered on the waves of a storm-tossed sea, will it do for a master swimmer to stand on the shore in safety and beckon to him to come up to the calm shore as best as he can? The master swimmer on the safe shore is comparable to the Brahman in Ānanda, free from danger or suffering, but the man on the waves is the sinner whose limited strength is being fast spent. If rescuing strength does not go out from the safe shore he will be overpowered by the waves. Will it not be more in keeping with the circumstances if the master swimmer jumps into the waters to rescue the sinking soul? If he does not do this he will stand self-condemned. Will it not then follow that the greater the Ānanda state of the Brahman the greater be His obligation to go out in search of even one wandering soul, and set it on its feet and enable it to realize the divinity that is in it?*



*He who seeks joy, let him seek it not in himself to the exclusion of others but in serving and sacrificing for others. Only here does man become more like God. This is the truth of Tat tvam asi that the Christian can accept. The redeeming activity is the inner truth about God and so it must be the inner truth about the redeemed man. Saved to save must be our motto. When we are redeemed we are not called upon to be lost in the Vision Beatific. But we are called upon to be co-workers in the redeeming activity of God for the regeneration of the world and the ushering in of the Kingdom of God when His will will be done on earth as in Heaven.*

# Christianity as a Historical Religion

M. E. GIBBS

Some months ago, the *Indian Journal of Theology* published a very interesting article by Dr. K. C. Matthew, comparing the anthropologies of Radhakrishnan and Brunner. He rightly pointed out that for Radhakrishnan man's goal is still the realization of his identity with essential self. Although Radhakrishnan allows a far higher value to human personality than the more traditional forms of Hindu philosophy do, his position is, after all, a form of the *advaita* idealism, and is open to the same objections. If individual existence is only a stage in the attainment of realization of oneness with the essential self, the process of history is cyclic and therefore meaningless ; and sin loses its moral seriousness, becoming mere ignorance and imperfection. Brunner's theology provides a contrast at all these points. An impassable gulf of difference divides the transcendent God, the Creator, from man His creature, a gulf which can only be passed because God has created man in His image and has revealed Himself to him. Sin is rebellion against God ; it involves guilt and pollution and separates man from God. Man can do nothing of himself to put things right ; he needs the grace of God ; and the effect of this grace is not identity but fellowship with God. So far, all Christians would agree with Brunner against Radhakrishnan ; and they would agree too with Brunner's statement that the supreme revelation of God was given through Jesus of Nazareth. So far as it goes, there is no need to quarrel either with Brunner's view that what matters is not so much knowledge about the historical character, Jesus of Nazareth, as the existential encounter with the cosmic Christ. So far as it goes—for the weakness of Brunner's theology appears here. He seems quite incapable of explaining why the cosmic Christ of this all-important encounter should be connected at all with the historical Jesus of Nazareth ; and certainly lays himself open to Radhakrishnan's criticism that he only makes such a connection because he has been bred in the Christian tradition. Moreover, Brunner fails as completely as Radhakrishnan does to give any real spiritual significance to history. This is suspicious, because it is in striking contrast to what we find in the Bible. A great deal of the contents of the

Bible is history, comment on history or materials for history. This is very different from the sacred books of other religions, which contain laws, philosophy, hymns and devotional poetry rather than the matter of fact historical narratives of the Bible ; and in which even the legends and traditions found in epics and *puranas* are valued more for the lessons they are supposed to teach or for their underlying mystical significance than as records of fact. In order to see just where the inadequacy of Brunner's theology lies, it will be necessary to consider the nature of history and its relation to Christianity.

History is the record of what man has done in the past ; but it is not every sort of record. We cannot speak of history in the full sense unless we have some knowledge of individual men and specific events. Thus, our knowledge of the Indus Valley Civilization is at present pre-historic, not historic. As no living tradition of that civilization has survived, and we have no decipherable inscriptions, we can only guess in a general way at its rise and fall ; we can tell something of the material conditions of its life, but we can infer little of the thoughts and characters of the men who produced it. We can trace no single personality and follow the course of no single event. We can, as a general rule, only call an event or a period historical when we are enabled to do these things by contemporary or nearly contemporary written evidence, though occasionally we may supplement or substitute for this such carefully and systematically memorized oral traditions as have for centuries existed in India. It is true that very important events may take place, which have affected all subsequent history, but which have left little or no historical record behind them—dimly seen movements of peoples and invasions and conquests and culture-contacts. It is, however, to be noted that, where these things have become the subject of historical record, their effect is the more permanent and profound. A people which has no history but dimly remembered oral traditions is rather like a child who has not yet reached the age of full self-consciousness.

It seems to be fundamental to our thought to suppose that we have explained something when we are able to refer it to a general principle of which it is an example. This is a corollary to the belief which is shared by all peoples who have risen to the level of philosophical thought, that there is some underlying principle of unity behind the world of phenomena. In its extreme form, this issues in the mathematician's ambition to sum up the whole of phenomenal existence in one complicated equation. Even when this has been done, however, the phenomena which it exists to explain have not been explained away ; they continue to exist as really as ever, in their own stubborn individuality and particularity. When we come to the applied sciences, and especially to biology, we find that something of the same is true. By observation and experiment we classify phenomena and establish the natural laws by which they work ; but the fact of

individualism and particularism remains, and the higher we go in the scale of existence, the more important it is. One particle seems to differ from another, at least in its life history ; but, even if they are of the same breed, one man's dog differs from another man's dog far more, and in a way that is of fundamental importance to their owners. The nearer we approach to the personal level, the more important does the individual and the particular become. History is concerned almost entirely with the personal, and so the generalizations which are the very stuff of natural science are of comparatively little importance for it. History was described by Bacon as a study to make men wise ; but the wisdom acquired by historical knowledge is of a different kind from that of the scientist or technician. Scientific knowledge admits of exact prediction and constant repetition. If the electrician is called in to mend a fused wire, if a doctor is confronted with a patient, he is confronted with a situation which he has met before in all its essential aspects ; and all he has to do is to repeat the process which he has used before, with the additional skill which comes from practice. History is an example of quite a different kind of learning from experience ; and no predictions have proved more wildly wrong than those of learned historians who have failed to realize this, and have ventured to prognosticate the future on the basis of the similarity of the situation before them to some situation in the past. The wisdom taught by history, like all wisdom in dealing with persons which comes from experience, is the result of a greater awareness of all the factors in a complicated situation, not of the application of a prescribed remedy to a recurrent set of symptoms.

Historical evidence resembles the process which a judge has to use to get at the truth of a case brought before him, rather than the method of observation and experiment used in science. The evidence is generally incomplete and often inconclusive. The judge is certain that there is a truth to be known which will explain the facts brought before him, but it is often impossible to establish beyond a peradventure what they are. If a murdered man is found in a lonely house at night, it is quite certain that there must have been a murderer, but unlikely that there was any eye-witness of the deed. The historian is often in a similar position. Moreover, the longer the time that has elapsed since the events in question, the fewer the direct evidences that are likely to remain. We have many more direct evidences of the career of Napoleon Bonaparte, who died a little more than a hundred years ago, than we have of Jesus of Nazareth, who died more than nineteen centuries ago. Must we then say that the evidence for the historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth is, by the very nature of the case, weaker than that for Napoleon ?

A very important consideration prevents us from coming to this conclusion. It is that real events have real results, real results have real causes. If a murdered body is found, there must have been a murderer ; if we are told that one of our friends has just

been seriously injured in a motor accident, and then within half an hour we meet him walking about alive and well, we conclude that the report has been, to say the least of it, exaggerated. Now there can be no doubt of the existence in the contemporary world of the Christian Church. As we trace its history back, we find it exercising a remarkable influence on the history of the world, particularly of Europe. We trace its history back into the first century, and there find its origin recorded in a collection of documents which tell of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The story is a remarkable one, but, if true, it does explain adequately the origin of the Christian Church and the part it has played in the subsequent history of the world. Any-one who refuses to accept it has got to suggest an alternative explanation which will account for all the admitted facts ; and this no-one so far has been able to do. We should only have the right to dismiss the New Testament as legendary or imaginary if the events recorded in it had left no effects on the subsequent history of the world.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible to trace the history of Christianity back to Jesus Christ because Christianity has been embodied in an organized community, the Christian Church. Such communities are the subject matter of history, and what give it its continuity. Without them, history becomes merely a matter of biographical episodes and isolated events. One reason for the discontinuity and episodic nature of Indian history is the absence of such continuous organized communities. No Indian religion—in fact, no other religion, except, to some extent, Judaism, has a Church in the Christian sense ;<sup>2</sup> the state has been extremely weak in India ; famine and war have constantly broken up the continuous existence of village communities ; and caste organization, the strongest element of the Indian social structure, has had no historians. What the historical continuity of a community means can be illustrated from the histories of the two oldest and best articulated nation states of western Europe, England and France. A consideration of the history of these two nations may throw some light on the meaning of historical continuity in the Christian Church, and the meaning to be attached to the statement that Christianity is in a special sense a historical religion.

English history has had a remarkable continuity from the English conquest in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. Almost

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<sup>1</sup> The events, not the book itself. A book of legendary stories may in fact have a very strong influence, for example, the Ramayana. But it is not possible so far to trace back a single institution or chain of real historic consequences to the events described in the Ramayana.

<sup>2</sup> In Buddhism, the sangha has very great importance, but this is the monastic community, not the community of all those who profess Buddhism, as the Christian Church is the community of all those who are in Christ. In Islam, in the Islamic state, Church and state are one in a way which can never happen with Christianity. Other religions have priesthoods but the priests are not the officials of the whole community of believers as the Christian clergy are.

all the villages of modern England have had a continuous existence since the tenth century or earlier. This is social and cultural continuity. But there has also been institutional continuity. The English brought with them at the conquest kings claiming divine descent and with a certain rudimentary political authority. The monarchy of Elizabeth II is demonstrably continuous with that of dim early English kings of the period before the English settled in Britain: but in the course of its passage it has undergone protean transformations, and it is the enormous capacity which it has shown for adaptation to circumstances which is the secret of its survival. French history had a similar continuity until the time of the great French Revolution, but this Revolution brought about as complete a break with the traditional institutions of the country as possible. Yet the French nation has not ceased to be identically the same French nation. The continuity of coherent constitutional development has been broken; not that of social and cultural identity.

Does institutional continuity matter? It was the ground of Burke's opposition to the French Revolution that it did, and that the wanton breach of it was bound to be disastrous; the subsequent histories of Britain and France have borne out his judgment. The French Revolution has not opened a new era of success and greatness for France. After the feverish and impermanent triumphs of the revolutionary and Napoleonic eras, her history has been one of declining influence, national division and failure to find any really satisfactory form for her central government.

The history of secular states can throw light on the nature of historic continuity in the Church because every human community, however much defaced by sin, keeps something of the pattern of the divine community of which God is the founder and king. On the other hand, the Church is a society of men in this world, subject to similar conditions and vicissitudes. Just as man himself has a dual nature—as a material being, a member of the animal kingdom and as a spiritual being made in the image of God and capable of fellowship with Him—so the Church has a dual existence. It is an earthly society sharing many of the characteristics of other earthly societies; it is also the Body and Bride of Christ, a colony of heaven, the visible part on earth of the Kingdom of God which is also the communion of saints and the celestial city. As the redeemed community, it is what human society might have been without the fall; it is the perfect society, the pattern to which all human societies ought to approximate.

These are great claims; to substantiate them we turn to the Bible. Here the people of God is one of the great essential themes which run through both Old and New Testaments. In Abraham's seed all the families of the earth are to be blessed. Abraham is chosen not merely as an individual; the choice is to include his descendants. The chosen family becomes

a tribe, then a group of tribes, then a nation and a kingdom. The Israelite monarchy is a curiously ambiguous institution. On the one hand, it represents rebellion against God: 'Ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God was your king' (1 Samuel 12:12; cf. 1 Samuel 7 and 8). On the other hand, the first clear conception of the Messiah was of an ideal king of David's line. David's own striking character, the long continuance of his dynasty, and the acceptance by the best of his descendants, especially Hezekiah and Josiah, of the teaching of the prophets, made this possible. Even before the exile, the attempt was being made in the temple at Jerusalem to reconcile the priestly religion of sacrifice with the teaching of the prophets. It was not a very easy matter to reconcile priest and prophet in Old Testament times; and some people have interpreted the strong denunciations by the prophets of corrupt temple worship as a condemnation of sacrifice itself, and with it, of institutional religion. This does not seem to have been the case; nor is the progressive revelation to be discerned in the Old Testament to be interpreted as a progress from corporate and institutional to individual religion. It is true that the troubles of Jeremiah taught him an entirely new kind of personal relation with God, and that Ezekiel, called upon to preach to a company of displaced persons—Jewish exiles in Babylon—had to lay an entirely new stress on individual responsibility (Ezekiel 12:18). But this did not involve any repudiation of corporate and institutional religion, and Ezekiel's prophecy ends with a vision of the restored temple and holy city. Society and the individual are not contrasted but complementary. The individual can only attain his full development in society, and that society is the best which is made up of the most fully developed and responsible individuals.

All through the history of Israel runs the theme of the faithful remnant and the faithless majority. The conquest of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria in 722 B.C. left Judah the sole heir of the promises. After the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebucadrezzar in 586, the Jews who did not accept the prophetic teaching simply became absorbed in the surrounding nations, as did the other peoples conquered by the Chaldeans. It was only the faithful remnant who accepted the prophetic teaching who returned from exile or formed the Judaism of the dispersion. In the restored community there was no monarchy; but the priesthood represented institutional continuity. Temple and sacrifices were restored, but without the old abuses. Animal sacrifice is an ugly thing, and the temple must often have looked and smelt like a butcher's shop. The teaching of the Gita seems much more spiritual:

*'If any earnest soul make offering to me with devotion of leaf or flower or fruit or water, that offering of devotion I enjoy'* (9:26).

It is easy to find a parallel to this in the New Testament, but it is not the whole truth about sacrifice. It leaves out the sense of sin that lay behind the offerings of 'goats and calves and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean' which made animal sacrifice, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews shows, an essential part of the preparation for the offering of the 'one full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice'—the life of Jesus Christ.

Our Lord came in the first place preaching the kingdom of God, a kingdom of which He was Himself the king. Once more we have the theme of the people of God. The twelve apostles clearly understood themselves to be chosen for office in that kingdom, and our Lord did not contradict them; they were to sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). It was about the nature of the expected kingdom and of authority in it that they were mistaken, so mistaken that in Gethsemane they all forsook Him and fled, and on Good Friday the faithful remnant of the true Israel had been reduced to one Man—and He was dead. With the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost all was changed. Those who identified themselves with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in His baptism formed the new Israel, the Christian Church (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-11; 1 Peter 3:18-22). But the Christian Church never appears as a formless and unorganized body, though we have not enough evidence in the New Testament to enable us to describe exactly the details of its organization. It is clear that from the beginning the apostles and elders—including the Lord's brothers—presided over the Church in Jerusalem. Apostles—who apparently included a wider circle than the Twelve, even with the addition of St. Paul—travelled about from Church to Church and claimed authority over the Churches which they founded (1 Corinthians 9:1; 2 Corinthians 12:12). Each of these Churches, so far as our evidence goes, was presided over by a council of presbyter-bishops whose office was probably copied from that of the elders of the Jewish synagogue. St. Paul three times uses the metaphor of the body to express the order and organization of the Church (Romans 12:4 and 5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-30; Ephesians 4:11-16). Among the first generation of Christians, the expectation of an immediate second coming of Christ was too vivid for there to be much thought of succession in office; but the conception appears very clearly in the epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, written probably about A.D. 96. By the middle of the second century if not earlier, each Church has its bishop presiding over a council of presbyters who, with the deacons, are ordained by him. He himself is consecrated by the laying on of hands of neighbouring bishops and claims to have succeeded, within his own Church, to the authority of the apostles; whilst the succession of bishops in certain important sees, especially those which could claim an apostle as founder, was carefully recorded and considered to ensure that the holders of these sees would be

specially reliable as upholders of sound doctrines—a matter which was particularly important in view of the challenge of gnostic beliefs at a time when the process of the formation of the canon of the New Testament was still incomplete. One of the most obscure questions in Church history is how the apostolic Church of the first century turned into the episcopal church of the second; but, whatever the exact process, it is clear that it must have been a natural and almost imperceptible growth; that it involved no conscious breach with the past and no particular controversy; for, small as our knowledge of the second century Church is, it is still sufficient to make it incredible that, if there had been any serious controversy over the development of episcopacy, it should have left absolutely no trace in our records. From that time to the Reformation there was no break in the organic development of the Church. In course of time permanent schisms arose—the ‘separated’ Churches of the East, the Jacobites and Nestorians, and later the permanent schism between East and West, but each of these separated branches preserved its organic connection with the undivided Church through the episcopate. The office of bishop did not, of course, remain exactly the same through the centuries; in fact it showed itself as protean as the English monarchy. First we have the second century bishop of a single congregation in a single city, normally presiding each Sunday at the Eucharist, though he might at need delegate one of the presbyters to act for him, and looking, with his council of presbyters, more like a Church of Scotland minister with his kirk session than like a modern diocesan bishop; then, the worldly-minded, courtier-bishop of the Christian empire, who is growing into a diocesan in the modern sense, with the multiplication of Christian congregations, the celebration of whose Eucharists has to be permanently deputed to a presbyter, who thus becomes a parish priest; the missionary bishop of the Dark Ages; the feudal bishop, a great landowner, as much statesman as churchman. Some of these developments were no doubt perversions and led to the abuses which provoked the Reformation.

The Reformation in its effect on the continuity of the Christian Church may be compared to the political revolutions in England and France. Whatever irregularities may have occurred over the centuries, episcopacy can claim, as no other form of Church government can, to be an unbroken development from apostolic times; and a Church like the Anglican, which took trouble to preserve this link at the Reformation, can still claim that continuity, though it is impossible to deny that great and revolutionary changes were made in the English Church at that time. They were similar in gravity to the seventeenth century revolutions in the English state, which also have not destroyed its continuity with the medieval kingdom of England. But the changes made in the Churches which rejected episcopacy were more comparable to those produced in France by the revolution. They did not mean that the non-episcopal reformed Churches

ceased to be part of the Church, any more than the French nation ceased to be the French nation ; but they did mean that in this case there had been a breach in the organic continuity between a part of the Church and its pre-Reformation past. This was partly caused by an extreme emphasis on individual religion which the rigid organization of the late medieval Church seemed to neglect. The whole Reformation has sometimes been somewhat inadequately summed up as the assertion of the right of private judgment—Luther's 'Here stand I, I can do no other'. There is enough truth in this to account for the predominance in Protestantism, particularly in German-speaking Protestantism, of a tradition of individual pietism which tends to neglect or minimize the importance of the Church.

Yet the point of contact between the individual man and the cosmic Christ is always the historic Church. This is true in the most extreme instances. Daniel Defoe, a Protestant Dissenter of the seventeenth century, makes Robinson Crusoe on his desert island, turn to his Bible after a bout of sickness and come to an experience of repentance and conversion through reading it, after a long career of carelessness and indifference. But in fact Robinson Crusoe did not come to a saving experience of Jesus Christ through the Bible alone without any help from the Church, any more than he made life comfortable for himself in his desert island by inventing for himself all the arts of civilization. He owed almost all that made his life on the island better than that of the surrounding savages to materials saved from the wreck, and to the knowledge and observation which came from his education and previous experience of life among civilized people. So it was with his Christianity. The Bible would not have existed at all if it had not been written by members of the Church ; it was the Church which had selected the writings which were to be included in it ; it was the value set upon the Bible by the Church and its use in worship which led to its being preserved, copied, handed down and translated into a language which Robinson Crusoe could understand. The captain's pious widow, who sent some Bibles to him with his other property, was presumably a member of some Puritan congregation in England. Crusoe himself had been, as he says, 'well instructed by father and mother' ; and it is obvious that what he expected to find in the Bible and how he interpreted what he read there, had been deeply affected by memories of that early instruction. Our point of encounter with the cosmic Christ always comes to us through the visible, historic Church ; and there is something lacking if it does not result in active membership within it.

A Christian is one who is 'in Christ' ; and the outward and visible sign of his condition is his sacramental incorporation into the Church which is Christ's body. This incorporation is, in the first place, effected by baptism. We find no unbaptized Christians in the New Testament. We must be born again 'by water and the Spirit' (John 3:5). Baptism stands for a death to sin and a

resurrection to new life in Christ (Romans 6:3-11; Colossians 3:3). Outside the Church there is no salvation because salvation in Christ is precisely life in the Christian fellowship—in the visible Church on earth which is the earnest of our inheritance and afterwards in the fuller fellowship of the communion of saints. So, after baptism, our sacramental union with Christ is continued by the constantly repeated experience of partaking in the Eucharist—the messianic banquet, the nourishment of our spiritual life, the outward and visible sign of our fellowship in Christ. The Eucharist is both the point of our closest and most intimate contact with Christ, and the thing which we can least of all do for ourselves in isolation. It is for this reason that the celebrant of the Eucharist must have a representative character. This is something that no man can take it upon himself to do. This, and not any kind of priestcraft coming between the individual soul and God, is the reason why all episcopal Churches reserve the celebration of the Eucharist to bishops and the presbyters ordained by them. This is the outward and visible sign of the historic continuity of the Church, the link which binds the celebration of the Eucharist in a modern Indian Church, or perhaps in no church at all, in the open air in a village, with all the Eucharists which have ever been celebrated throughout the ages, back to that upper room in Jerusalem where our Lord said, ‘Do this in remembrance of Me’. God’s grace will be given wherever any of his Church meet together with a sincere intention of obeying His commandment; but the outward and visible sign of continuity provided by the orders of the minister adds a new dimension to the sacrament. It makes us free of the whole historic past of the Church. It reminds a particular congregation in a particular place and time that they are no mere fortuitous collection of Christians but are organically incorporated into the Body of Christ.

Christianity is essentially sacramental. It has been described as the most material of all the great religions, for in it neither matter nor worldly existence are the source of evil. God created the world and made it good, and when the fullness of time was come, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Matter therefore becomes the vehicle of spiritual truth; and indeed we can come by it in no other way. The new life of the Spirit at Pentecost had to be embodied in the life of the visible Church with its institutions and its organized organic life. Of this institution it is possible to write a history with little or no reference to the basis of its existence. Nor has that history always been creditable. At times the principle of the faithful remnant has reasserted itself, as it did in the old Israel before the incarnation. Yet in spite of all its weaknesses, the presence of the Church in the world is a sacramental presence. It is the outward and visible sign of the presence of Christ in the world, and its organic continuity with the Church in the past, though it is not the only form which continuity can take, unites us in a

visible community with prophets and apostles and saints. Through the Church and in no other way can we attain the all-important contact with the cosmic Christ which is the centre of Brunner's theology ; and it is only through the connection maintained by the continuity of its history between the Church and its Founder that we can understand the essential identity of the man Jesus of Nazareth and the cosmic Christ.



*Doing what we ought not to do or not doing what we ought to do is the bane of our whole human history. The very fact that we have the idea of the 'ought' in us shows that there is already the working of the Divine in us. To convert the 'ought' into the 'is' needs more than human power. When we become conscious of this there is ready at hand the infinite resources of the Divine energy surging all round. A clear consciousness of the moral situation together with the determined effort to be on the side of the good, will open the flood gates of Divine energy into our lives. It is at this point that we could say with St. Paul, 'It is no longer I that liveth but Christ that liveth in me.' This is the kernel of truth in the Upanisadic phrase Tat tvam asi.*



*The Vedānta gives us the immanence of God in the soul, the Sāṅkhya emphasizes the individuality and inalienability of the self, Yoga teaches the way of self-realization through self-control, Mimāṁsā lays down the idea of salvation through disinterested work and the Nvāva and Vaiśeṣika emphasize the need of clear thinking to come to right conclusions. These, taken generally, are valuable elements which cannot be ignored in systematic theistic thinking. If we can only incorporate all these valuable elements with the central significance given to morality, we will find ourselves moving towards a Theism that will be able to appreciate the need for thinking of God as suffering in a moral universe for the regeneration of souls.*

# Towards a Biblical Theology of Mission

PETER MAY

The word Mission is derived from a Latin word meaning sending ; and the English word send is used in our English versions of the Bible to translate the Hebrew word *shalach* and the Greek words *pempo* and *apostello*. Any Biblical Theology of Mission must begin therefore with an examination of the ways in which these words are used in the Bible.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT

Our Old Testament material may be divided into three answers to three questions: Who is the sender ? (Or, who initiates the mission ?) Who are sent ? (Or, who are the missionaries ?) and Why are they sent ? (Or, what is the purpose of the mission ?) The answers to these three questions will of course find their final concentration in the New Testament.

Examination of a concordance will reveal how often God is said to send ; for example, out of the twenty-three times in which the word *shalach* is used in the Book of Psalms in no less than twenty-one the subject of the sending is God Himself. Sometimes this reference is to a sending of God in the past, as in Psalm 105:26: 'He *sent* Moses his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen' ; sometimes it is a reference to the future as in Psalm 57:3: 'He shall *send* from heaven, and save me, when he that would swallow me up reproacheth ; God shall *send* forth his mercy and his truth' ; and sometimes it is a prayer to God to send in the present situation, as in Psalm 43:3: 'O *send* out thy light and thy truth ; let them lead me : and let them bring me unto thy holy hill'. Although in no other book of the Old Testament is the proportion of divine sendings to human sendings so high, none the less it remains true that sending or mission is, according to the Old Testament, a prerogative which belongs especially to God Himself ; the initiative in 'mission' belongs with God.

It should also be noted that, as scholars tell us, the word *shalach* suggests not merely that God sends, but that whatsoever or whomsoever He sends He sends as His instrument or as His agent officially authorized to act on His behalf ; in fact generally the word lays more stress on the sender than on the person sent.

When we ask the Old Testament, Whom does God send? Who are God's missionaries? we find that we are given four main answers:

(a) God sends various kinds of troubles, plagues, pestilences, sword, hornets, serpents and the like. There are some fifty such references in the Old Testament; Amos 4:10 may serve as an example: 'I have *sent* among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt... Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord'. The significance of these passages will be considered later in this article.

(b) God sends judges (1 Samuel 12:11) like Gideon (Judges 6:14), and kings like Saul (1 Samuel 9:16), and even foreign rulers like Nebuchadrezzar (Jeremiah 43:10; cf. Isaiah 10:6); but especially do we read of God sending Moses and Aaron (Exodus 3:10-15; Micah 6:4).

(c) God sends prophets (Jeremiah 7:25 etc.), for example Samuel (1 Samuel 16:1), Nathan (2 Samuel 12:1), Elijah (Malachi 4:5), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:7), Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2:3), Haggai (Haggai 1:12), Zechariah (Zechariah 2:8-11) and of course Isaiah (Isaiah 6:8-8).

(d) Judges, kings and prophets are all regarded as God's specially authorized agents sent by Him to perform some special work for Him. There are passages however which speak of God sending not just human agents but as it were something of Himself. For example we are told that God sends His angel to deliver Daniel from the lions' den (Daniel 6:22), and to protect the Hebrews in their wanderings (Exodus 23:20); here we should remember that in the Old Testament the angel is regarded as an extension of God's personality among men. Almost as frequent too are passages which speak of God sending His word, especially Isaiah 55:10f which runs as follows: 'For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I *sent* it'; this passage is of singular importance for it suggests both a going out from God and a coming back to Him. Other passages which speak of God sending something from His very self are Psalm 110:2 (His strength), Psalm 104:30 (His spirit) and Exodus 23:27 (His terror). In all these passages we are to think of God Himself accomplishing His mission through as it were an extension of His personality.

If we ask, Why does God send? the Old Testament answers that the purpose of God's sending is seen in the types of things and people whom He sends. Thus the first purpose of God's sending is redemptive and saving. This is seen in the sending of judges and kings: so Saul is sent 'to save my people out of the

hand of the Philistines' (1 Samuel 9:16); Moses and Aaron are especially sent as the agents of God's redemptive purpose (1 Samuel 12:8); Joseph was sent by God to preserve His people in a time of famine (Genesis 45:5-8); the angels are sent to protect and defend God's people in their time of need (Exodus 23:20). God sends to deliver, and this can be seen especially in Isaiah 61:1: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath *sent* me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound' (cf. also Psalm 57:3).

The second purpose of God's sending according to the Old Testament is to bring God's people back to Himself. This purpose is seen especially in the sending of the prophets whose function it is to make Israel repent and turn back to her God. Thus Nathan is sent to David to make him repent of his sin with regard to Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:1); Ezekiel and Jeremiah are both sent to bring home to God's people their sinfulness and turn them back to God (Jeremiah 1:7; Ezekiel 2:3, 4). The famous 'sending' of Isaiah has the same import: 'And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I *send*, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; *send* me, And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not . . .' (Isaiah 6:8f).

It is in this connection that the sending of plagues, pestilences and the like is best to be understood; generally speaking these are regarded as sent by God to punish His people for their sinfulness (so for example the sending of the lions in 2 Kings 17:25, and of the locusts in Joel 2:25), but the underlying purpose is deeper, namely God sends these afflictions not just as a punishment but in order that His people may recognize their sinfulness and return to Him (so the sending of the serpents in Numbers 21:6-7).

This brief survey of God's sending in the Old Testament thus gives us the following conclusions:

(i) It is God who sends; the initiative in sending or mission lies with God;

(ii) The purpose in sending is twofold, first to deliver His people from their enemies both spiritual and material; second to bring back His people to Himself;

(iii) Those whom God sends are always related to this twofold purpose, that is, kings, judges and leaders, to deliver His people, prophets and afflictions to bring them back to Himself;

(iv) There is little or no suggestion that God's sending extends beyond His own people; it is to Israel that God sends His judges, prophets and afflictions, either to deliver or to bring back to Himself. Nor is there any suggestion that Israel is herself sent by God to deliver the other nations and bring them to God, except perhaps in the famous servant songs of Isaiah.

(v) Of primary importance are the passages in which God is said to send something from His own self, His word, His angel or His spirit. The passage from Isaiah 55:11 which we have already quoted suggests that God's sendings reflect something in His very character, namely going out from Himself and a coming back to Himself; as we shall see later, this outgoing and incoming is of significance for our understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity.

### THE NEW TESTAMENT

When we turn to the New Testament, we shall find our material to be somewhat similar to that in the Old Testament, but with a very significant change, for the central figure here is of course our Lord Jesus Christ, who is both the sent and the sender.

The New Testament, as distinct from the Old, knows two senders. Predominantly, as in the Old Testament, the sender is God, so at least in ninety cases where the words *pempo* and *apostello* are to be found. But there are some eighteen cases in which Christ Himself is the sender. This usage reflects the gradual attribution of the prerogatives of God to Christ Himself.

So far as those sent by God are concerned, the material sorts itself out into three main groups. First there are some twenty passages in which God's sendings are very similar to those of the Old Testament; for He sends prophets such as Elijah (Luke 4:26) and John the Baptist (Mark 1:2; John 1:6; cf. Matthew 23:34); He sends angels like Gabriel (Luke 1:19, 26) and rulers like Moses (Acts 7:34, 35); here we are clearly moving in the same circle of ideas as in the Old Testament and all these people sent by God have their place in God's purpose of either delivering from evil or recalling men back to Himself.

But the major group of passages, secondly, speaks of God sending our Lord Jesus Christ. Some fifty-seven passages make Jesus the object of the sending of God, mostly of course in such phrases as 'the Father who sent me', a phrase which is found no less than forty-three times in St. John's Gospel. As is well known, two Greek words are used by our Lord in St. John's Gospel, for send, *pempo* and *apostello*. According to Rengstorff (*Bible Key Words: Apostleship*) the difference between them lies in the fact that 'John regularly uses *pempein* to indicate God's sharing in the work of Jesus, and *apostellein* to assert Jesus' divine commission'. Whichever is used, clearly the emphasis is laid on the sender rather than on the sent, either as sharing in the work of Christ, or as authorizing Him to work on His (God's) behalf.

It is important also to notice that the significance of this sending lies in the fact that it is nearly always in the context of the Father-Son relationship; this is of course obvious in the Fourth Gospel, but St. Paul also associates God's sending of Christ with the Father-Son relationship in for example Galatians 4:4 and Romans 8:3. The fact is that the suggestions in the Old Testament that God sends something of His own self, an extension of

His own personality, find their fulfilment in the sending of His beloved and only Son (Mark 12:6), the effulgence of His glory, the very image of His substance (Hebrews 1:3).

A careful reading of the passages in the Fourth Gospel which speak of God's sending of His Son shows that the main emphasis is on the fact that the Son is sent as the representative of the Father, authorized to do the Father's will (John 5:23; 12:44f; cf. Matthew 10:40), and that Christ's work is in fact the work of the Father through Him (John 8:16, 18, 26, 29).

If we ask the purpose of this sending, there is no doubt that Christ is sent to redeem. Again and again this is expressly said to be the purpose of the sending: so Matthew 15:24; John 3:17; Romans 8:3; Galatians 4:5; 1 John 4:9f; we can in fact sum up the purpose of the sending of Christ in 1 John 4:14: 'The Father hath *sent* the Son to be the Saviour of the world'. Here our Lord fulfils the Old Testament picture of the judge or the king sent by God to redeem His people from their foes, both spiritual and material. But the second purpose of God's sending, as we saw it in the Old Testament, was to bring His people back to Himself; this purpose also is to be seen in the sending of Christ by God into the world. So his opening message was, according to Mark 1:15: 'The hour is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe in the Gospel' (cf. Luke 5:32; 15:7, 10—we may note here that the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin both stress not only the redemptive work of Christ but also the necessity of turning back to God). Thus our Lord may be said to fulfil the Old Testament picture of the prophet or teacher, sent by God to recall and bring His people back to Himself. None the less, although both purposes are to be found in the Gospels, the predominant purpose, as our New Testament writers understand it, of God's sending of Christ is redemptive.

Why did God send the Holy Spirit? Two passages are of importance in answering this question, namely John 14:26, where the Father is to send the Comforter in the name of Christ, to 'teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you'; and Galatians 4:6, where we read: 'And because ye are sons, God *sent* forth the spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father'. Here it is clear that by the sending of the Son God has made all men His sons in the Son, and by the sending of the Holy Spirit God enables those who are made sons in Christ's redemptive sending to respond to God as sons and call Him Abba, Father. The Holy Spirit is sent not to rescue and to redeem but to enable men to come back to God as redeemed sons. Thus God's sending of the Holy Spirit corresponds roughly to God's sending of the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, while God's sending of the Son corresponds roughly to God's sending of judges and kings.

The two sendings are of even deeper significance, for they reflect something of God's character in Himself. For we see

first the outgoing love of the Father to man expressed in the sending of the Son, and second the incoming love of the Son (who includes all men in Himself) for the Father expressed in the sending of the Holy Spirit, who enables men to respond as sons to the Father. This is something of what we mean when we speak of the Holy Spirit (Love) proceeding from the Father (to the Son) and from the Son (to the Father).

We have already noticed that there are some eighteen passages in which Christ is described as the sender ; to these we must now turn. It is first significant that in the New Testament God's sending is virtually confined to the sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit ; there are almost no references at all to God sending anyone *after* the sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit, an indication that God's purpose of redeeming His people and bringing them back to Himself has been in principle fulfilled in the sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Yet this would not be an entirely true understanding of the New Testament teaching about 'mission', for it is not possible for the New Testament writers to speak about either Christ or the Spirit, without speaking about the Church ; say Christ, and you have to say 'in Christ' or 'the Body of Christ' ; say Spirit, and you have to say 'the temple of the Holy Spirit' or 'the fellowship of the Holy Spirit'. The meaning of this is clear ; to describe the Church as the Body of Christ is to say that God's purpose in sending the Son to redeem and to save has been accomplished and is being accomplished ; the Church is the redeemed community. And to describe the Church as the temple of the Holy Spirit is to say that as the object of God's redemptive sending in Christ she is able to offer back to Him the worship and service appropriate to Sonship through the Holy Spirit ; as St. Peter tells us in 1 Peter 2:5f: 'Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ our Lord'.

In one sense then God's sendings of the Son and the Spirit have fulfilled His purpose, for the Church as the Body of Christ is His redeemed people, empowered by the Holy Spirit to offer back to God the filial response of worship.

This would suggest that the Church has no mission, but is simply the sphere in which the purpose of God's sendings have been and are being fulfilled. But such an impression is altogether false to the New Testament teachings. For there are some dozen or so references to Christ's sending of the disciples and it is to these that we must now turn, in order to understand the mission of the Church.

We will note first that our Lord is said to have sent His disciples out from Himself several times in His own lifetime on earth. For example Mark 3:14 tells us how 'He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that he might *send* them forth to preach and to have authority to cast out devils'. Such a sending forth is recorded in Mark 6:7-13 ; Matthew 10:5-42 (see

especially Matthew 10:16); Luke 9:1-6; and Luke 10:1-20. In all these passages our Lord authorizes His disciples to act as His representatives, so much so that He can say: 'He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me' (Matthew 10:40). This sending has a twofold purpose, similar to that of our Lord's, namely to heal and to cast out devils and to preach repentance (Matthew 10:7-8; Mark 6:12, 13; Luke 10:9; 9:2).

These sendings of the disciples by our Lord occurred in His own lifetime and were of a temporary nature. They reach their climax in the Upper Room on Easter Day when Christ not only gives the assembled apostles, that is the Church in embryo, the gift of the Holy Spirit, but also authorizes them to act as His representatives to carry on His work: 'As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you' (John 20:21; cf. John 13:20; 17:18). Here the sending is more permanent in nature and in fact this incident in the Upper Room constitutes the Church's missionary charter.

All this makes it clear that we can only think of the mission of the Church as an extension of God's sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit. There is in one sense, it is true, no such thing as the mission of the Church; we can only speak of the mission of God who sent His Son to redeem and His Holy Spirit to bring back the redeemed to Himself. The Church as the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit is both the sphere in which these sendings have fulfilled and are fulfilling His purpose, and also the body through which today God is sending His Son to redeem and the Holy Spirit to bring back. The mission of the Church has no meaning apart from her being the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit; and these things she is, not in her own right, but because God's sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit have so made her. It will be clear too that God's mission through the Church is simply the completion of His mission through the Son and the Holy Spirit; it is, as someone has remarked, the mopping-up operations after the major victory has been won; these mopping-up operations will continue until God completes fully the purpose which in principle He has already completed in the sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit, namely the redeeming and bringing back of mankind to Himself.

We may conclude with a quotation from Dr. Andersen's valuable little booklet, '*Towards a Theology of Mission*' (page 47), which provided the original stimulus for this article and which our Biblical research has amply confirmed: 'The triune God Himself is declared to be the sole source of every missionary enterprise. Essential in the missionary purpose of God are the sending of the Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit. God did not cease to participate in the missionary enterprise with the sending of the Son once for all in the flesh. He did not make a beginning, which must then be carried forward by human efforts; He did not lay

down a pattern, after which men were to develop their missionary enterprises. With the sending of the Holy Spirit—who proceeds from the Father and the Son—He has made it evident that He retains the missionary enterprise in His own hands and does not surrender it to any human authority. Therefore God is, and remains till the last day, the One who alone carries on the missionary enterprise, the One of whom alone such terms can with propriety be used.'



## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER

The passages quoted on pages 9, 20, 28 and 32 are taken from *The Suffering God*, by C. S. Paul, published by the C.L.S., Madras, in 1932.

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*It may be strange to speak of suffering love as power ; but it is just that power that is conquering the world. The law of love is the law of the universe. Thus God in suffering is not betraying His helplessness against mightier odds, as it is supposed, but is conquering and establishing His reign in a moral world in the only way that is going to be ultimately and permanently successful. The path of love is no easy one. The greater the love, the greater the sacrifice and suffering ; it is the path that was trodden by Jesus ; it is the path that is trodden by God through all eternity in relation to His sinful creatures. Our belief is that God Almighty does and can suffer in relation to His sinful creatures. Such love is the only Omnipotence.*

# Review Article

## THE CALL OF THE MINARET

K. ANAND

Among the many books on Islam published recently, Dr. Kenneth Cragg's *The Call of the Minaret*<sup>1</sup> has a special relevance in respect of the reconciliation so urgently needed between Islam and Christianity today. It is written primarily with the intention of promoting a better understanding of Islam to Christian readers as well as of removing some of the traditional misconceptions in Islam with regard to certain fundamental doctrines of Christianity. It makes a fresh appeal both to the Muslim and the Christian for renewed effort to look sympathetically and objectively at each other's point of view in the light of contemporary thought and research in both religions.

The title of the book, *The Call of the Minaret*, is as attractive as Bevan-Jones's *The People of the Mosque*, and the ground covered in both is much the same. But Dr. Cragg's book, being a recent publication, has the advantage of dealing with circumstances which have appeared within the last decade, favourable to friendly conversation between the two religions.

*The Call of the Minaret* divides itself into three sections : The Contemporary Setting ; Minaret and Muslim ; and Minaret and Christian.

In the first section the author gives an interesting assessment of the contemporary situation in the world of Islam, which stretches out as the Crescent, the symbol of Islam, from Africa to China. He traces the resurgence of nationalism in all Islamic countries, and describes how most of them now share with other free countries, the responsibilities and privileges of co-existence (p. 12). In the realms of education, commerce, science and technology, as well as in social and religious matters within the community, the Muslims are encountering unprecedented situations. All these are drawing them away from the old limitations of orthodoxy which appear out of date and unsuitable. One of the important features of contemporary Islam is the weakening of traditional fanaticism, and an increasing willingness of some

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<sup>1</sup> Published by the Oxford University Press, New York, 1956. Pp. 376.  
Price \$6.25.

Muslims to engage in friendly and equal debate with other religions, especially Christianity (p. 25).

Drawing attention to this remarkable change in the psychology of the Muslim, the author in the second section, Minaret and Muslim, appeals to the Christian to make an objective and sympathetic study of the Muslim faith. He pleads for a better understanding of the Muslim position, to invoke an adequate response to the new outlook in present-day Islam.

The author makes an ingenious use of the *Adhan* (Call to Prayer) as a basis to describe the various aspects of Muslim religion. The formula 'There is no God except God, and Muhammad is the Apostle of God. Come ye unto prayer. Come ye unto good' opens up to the author the various strands of Muslim faith and practice. The fundamental ideas of the unity of God as the Muslim understands it, the apostleship of Muhammad, the devotional life and social order in Islam, are all drawn from this oft-repeated and familiar call of the minaret. The most attractive and commendable feature of this section of the book is the sympathetic and non-belligerent spirit in which the author deals with the doctrinal intricacies of the Muslim faith. Even a devout Muslim reader of this analysis of his religion would find it a just appreciation of his faith, for it is done by one who has made a thorough and scientific study of Islam. Dr. Cragg adds to it the experience of many years spent living among Muslims in the Middle East.

The third section, Minaret and Christian, is the most interesting part of the book from the point of view of the Christian reader. Just as the call of the minaret is a proclamation of the Muslim of what his religion stands for, it is a challenge to the Christian for a renewed effort to face squarely the centuries-old erroneous ideas in Islam regarding the Christian faith. The orthodox Muslim believes that Islam was divinely appointed to resist and rectify the errors of Christianity. 'Islam claims that in its historic faith the Church has misconstrued the mission of Jesus. Since the errors involved the central points of the Christians' understanding of Jesus, His Incarnation, His death upon the Cross, the issue admits of no reconciliation. The Muslim sees Islam correcting Christian "distortion" of Jesus and of God' (p. 245). And so Islam since its inception has opposed Christianity as a religion that has gone wrong, to be rectified only by the purer teaching of Islam which came later to correct and supersede the older religion.

The author tells us that it was unfortunate that in the early formative years of Muhammad's quest for truth he had no access to the 'historic' faith of the Church. Instead he came in contact with Christians of certain heretical sects, namely the Monophysites, the Nestorians and a section of the orthodox Catholic Church which laid undue stress on the veneration of the Virgin Mary. These had been condemned by the Great Councils, and had taken refuge in and around Arabia. He firmly believes that

had the Prophet of Arabia come in contact with genuine Christianity at the time, the history of Arabia might have been different (p. 263).

Dr. Cragg goes on to describe 'five important areas' in which the heretical Christians in the Arabia of Muhammad's time erred in presenting the historic faith of the Church. These are 'the Christian scriptures, the Person of Jesus, the Christian doctrine of God, and the Christian Church and Christian Society' (p. 275). The challenge of the call of the minaret to the Christians today lies in a careful and sympathetic presentation of these fundamental doctrines of traditional Christianity. The author devotes a whole chapter (pp. 271-331), expounding these doctrines from the Christian angle, using many illuminating meeting points in Muslim and Christian scriptures and teaching. To a Muslim who is prepared to read this chapter with an unbiased and open mind Dr. Cragg's exposition should be most helpful in removing the age-old misconceptions which have been a barrier to the understanding of true Christianity.

In the last chapter of the book, the author deals with the question of paucity of converts from Islam. Apart from the difficulties a Muslim has to face from within his own religion and community, there are many obstacles which the Church itself places in the way of effective evangelism among Muslims. The latter are far more serious than the obstacles which come from Islam itself. Among these is the attitude of the Church towards a convert from Islam. The Church to this day has not realized the need of extending a sympathetic and affectionate welcome to the new convert. Instead of being gladly and affectionately welcomed to the Christian brotherhood, the Muslim convert is looked upon with suspicion and fear. It is little realized how much it has cost him to renounce the fellowship of his own community. He is accused of having ulterior motives in joining the Church. But the worst injury is inflicted by those who express the opinion that sooner or later the convert will turn back to Islam. Dr. Cragg mentions several converts from Islam by name on page 345, who by their sacrifice and labour in the cause of the Master have not only testified to the genuineness of their conversion but have proclaimed to the end of their days that the Spirit of Christ is stronger than any other bond of allegiance, and that it is wrong to assume that a Muslim convert will fall back eventually to his community.

Towards the close of his book (pp. 347-350) Dr. Cragg makes a suggestion with regard to the integration of Muslim converts into the Church. Because there is a constant pull on a convert from his old community, especially with the threat of the consequences of apostasy, and because the Church is slow in welcoming him into its midst, and also because he should not become an alien to Muslim society and the local community, it may be expedient to appoint for him 'a new status, in which those who respond or desire to respond to Christ, might be encouraged to

associate with fellow or potentially fellow Christians, without alienating their old context irrevocably by any formal step which that context will so interpret' (p. 348); the status suggested is that of 'Lovers of Jesus' (p. 349) for whom 'baptism is left in abeyance'. The intention is not to designate them as secret believers, for no sincere seeker can remain hidden and unknown. The idea is to wean them gradually from their old context, and not hurry them into the new environment of the Church. The period of probation would give sufficient time to the 'Lovers of Jesus' to study the pros and cons of the eventual break with their old religion, and will give sufficient time to the receiving community to make room for them in their midst. The only object of this expedient is 'to encourage the hope and ideal of larger and more viable units of baptism than the individual and to discourage Muslim misconception and antagonism' (p. 349).

This book is an excellent example of the type of literature needed today to bridge the centuries-old misconceptions between Islam and Christianity. The reviewer would commend the book heartily to those who are striving for a better understanding between the two faiths and a happier relationship between their adherents.



*Hindu theism is different from Christian theism in conceiving both the purpose and the nature of Incarnation. Hindu incarnations are for the purpose of restoring the lost balance in the static morality called Varnāśrama Dharma. Hence it needs an incarnation every time there is an upsetting of the balance. It posits accordingly many incarnations. Christian theism is based upon a higher dynamic morality, which is expressive of the nature of both God and man, which values man as man, and which permits of no complete transcending of the moral. In such a moral order the purpose of Incarnation will be the revelation in time and space of a 'God who lives in the perpetual giving of Himself, who shares the life of His finite creatures, bearing in and with them the whole burden of their finitude, their sinful wanderings and sorrows, and the suffering without which they cannot be made perfect.' This is the purpose and meaning of Christian Incarnation, which, once staged on the plane of time, is enough to symbolize, once and for ever, God's act of redemption continued through eternity.*

## Book Reviews

*Composition of the Book of Judges* : by C. A. Simpson (Blackwell n.p.).

This book is really a continuation of the author's study of the Pentateuch published ten years ago. In the former book he claimed that the J material made familiar to most students by Wellhausen is not one homogeneous body of material, but can be analysed into three traditions, J1, written perhaps at Hebron in the reign of David, J2 written between 950 and 850, and E written about 700 B.C. He does not maintain that these are independent of each other, but claims that J2 at least was written in order to supplement and correct J1. This analysis is continued in the present book and applied to the Book of Judges, where, the author claims, exactly the same distinguishable traditions can be found. Naturally he also finds Deuteronomic and later redactional material in the Book as well. This analysis is most interesting, even to those who, like the reviewer, are not competent to judge its validity to any great extent, for, if it is accurate, it pushes much farther back than we have been used to the earliest continuous narrative in the Pentateuch. It also goes some way to counteract the extreme agnosticism displayed by the school of Noth about any events or persons before the Settlement of Canaan.

At the same time one cannot help voicing a perplexity as one reads the very carefully built up and detailed evidence for the author's conclusions. What are his canons of evidence? Certain broad standards emerge clearly enough, matters of vocabulary, for instance. To take a small example, one is ready to agree when Dr. Simpson claims that the use of the Niphal of HYH in Judges, chapters 19 and 20, indicates that the verses in which it occurs may be put in a class of their own, since an examination of a good Hebrew dictionary tells one that this usage is extremely rare in pre-Deuteronomic writings. But the rules of evidence are not by any means always as clear as this. Sometimes they strike one as purely subjective: e.g. in Judges 19:22 Dr. Simpson claims that the 'sons of Belial' must come from a different source from 'the men of the city' because 'such a gang could scarcely have surrounded the house'. Why should a gang of roughs not have surrounded a house? Your reviewer writes as one who has had the experience of being surrounded in a house by a gang of roughs, and can assure Dr. Simpson that they are just as capable of surrounding a house as any band of citizenry. If this is the

sort of evidence on which sources are to be detected, one cannot feel any great confidence in the conclusions arrived at. One's confidence is further sapped by the last fifty pages of his book, in which he engages in a most elaborate and technical argument with Professor Eissfeldt, who had apparently denied the conclusions of his previous book pretty thoroughly. It is no doubt entertaining for the experts to fight out their battles in print like this, but it is quite impossible for the spectators to decide at the end who has won. Small wonder that the mere student tends to shrug his shoulders and conclude that he must suspend judgement about the composition of the Pentateuch and the Book of Judges until some assured results have been reached. But is there any reason to believe that this happy state of affairs will ever come about, and is it fair to ask the man in the pew to suspend judgement indefinitely as well ?

Bangalore

ANTHONY HANSON

*The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood*: M. E. Thrall,  
S.C.M. Studies in Ministry and Worship. 8s. 6d.  
(Available from the Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 5 Russell  
Street, Calcutta 16).

Miss Thrall offers this study of the Biblical evidence concerning priesthood as 'a provocation to debate, in the hope that others may be induced to pursue the question further'. There are a good many women in the Church of England today who feel that the Church they belong to treats far too superficially a matter that is of deep personal concern to some of their number. If the present study does nothing more, it should convince sceptics and advocates alike that here is a subject to which little theological study has been given and which cannot be dismissed as unworthy of proper treatment. It is, after all, a new situation with which the Church in the West has not before been faced. At many times in the past there have been learned women, whose thought and spiritual wisdom has been recognized by men, but on the whole they have been exceptions, for the whole weight of probability regarding their chances of education and authority has been in the scales against them. Now there are a great number of women members of the Church whose educational level equals, and in not a few cases goes far beyond, the educational level of the clergy. This fact alone may explain some of the conservatism and hesitation about facing the matter seriously on the part of some men.

Miss Thrall deals in this study with the one aspect of priesthood, and naturally a good deal of the material is concerned with authority. She works out the 'theology of the Old Testament approach to the conception of priesthood, starting from the whole Old Testament attitude to the sexes as affected by the fall. She surveys some of the New Testament evidence, the historical

circumstances of the Incarnation, and has a chapter on the ordination of women priests in which she refers to most of the published literature on the subject. She exposes in this the utter failure of those who oppose the ordination of women to produce any theological case that can stand scrutiny.

I am not happy about the whole of the case which Miss Thrall herself presents, however. She handles the Old Testament much more in the manner of a Rabbi than of the Christian expositor. One cannot find the Christian doctrine of creation on the Genesis stories, for instance, using every detail as of allegorical significance and yet implying it is historic fact: God has not given us the perfect assurance on these matters such as we have when we rest our doctrine of sin and redemption on the life, death and resurrection of our Lord. We have to take more account of the origin of these Genesis stories, and recognize not only their magnificent and glorious testimony, but also their omissions. Their discrepancies must not be necessarily explained away or neatly reconciled.

Fundamentally, the criticism I would make of this work is that it is perhaps impossible to work within the limits Miss Thrall has set herself, when we are concerned with the Christian ministry. Our Lord Himself fulfilled once and for all and abolished the Jewish priesthood, and we do not find the New Testament writers concerned to assert that the Jewish priesthood passed from the Jews to them. Priesthood is used in their writings of our Lord or of the *whole* people of God. When one studies priesthood in isolation from the Christian conception of ministry, it is inevitable that much is lost by the need to concentrate on authority. I would not thereby imply that authority is unimportant, for plainly any properly constituted ministry must be a duly authorized one, but we miss a great deal if we concentrate on this one point. I think a good deal that is of significance in the New Testament has been actually missed in this study.

Here are some points which to me weigh in the question: what of the women who were the first witnesses of the resurrection and the first to announce it to others? What of the women in Romans 16 who are spoken of with the same word as Paul uses of his own ministry? Paul also allows women to speak in Church if veiled: what different circumstances had he in mind in the two contradictory passages? I would like to read more of these points, in which the practice of the early Church is some guide, for one cannot but feel that arguments from the life of St. Mary do not get us very far. Her part in the redemption of the world is unique and unrepeatable, however much her humility should be a model for both sexes alike.

Ultimately I would suggest that it would help the whole discussion if we should reword the question and translate it into different terms. Working as my husband and I are at the moment in a contemporary 'early Church', where these questions can be raised afresh and not meet vested interests on all sides, we

would say that much good can come from discussion of the question: 'What is the ministry of men and women within the Church, and how is it related?' It is just closing one's eyes to plain facts if one tries to maintain that in this life redemption does away with the differences between the sexes, any more than with the variety of gifts of the Spirit which distinguish individuals. The Kingdom of Heaven is no Welfare State which levels all to one monotonous uniformity, except in the realization that we are all sinners redeemed by God's amazing love. I am convinced that richness and diversity of function are part of God's pattern for the redeemed in this world, and to this diversity men and women should be contributing within the Christian ministry. I remember a very similar point arising in a discussion on the wireless between Laurence van der Post and his wife—both are writers, but the husband paid a most interesting tribute to the different approach his wife brought to their joint work and was in no doubt about the enrichment that he gained through it. Such experiences, common today in other spheres, the Church has largely ignored throughout its history.

There is far more at stake in this discussion of the ministry than just the ordination to priest's orders of a few individual women. I am convinced that if the Church once set out resolutely to tackle the wider question, the Holy Spirit would guide both the women concerned and the Church itself as to the right action to be taken. But for the few women who personally desire ordination to priest's orders, there are many who, like Miss Thrall, would wish to share in the ministry of the Word. Having held a Lay Reader's Licence in a C.S.I. Diocese, I can witness both to the conviction of vocation being compelling, and with thankfulness to the joy of being able to respond to the call with the blessing of the Church. I am not suggesting any limitation of the ministry of women to this one point, however, but feel that all aspects of Christian ministry should be fully reconsidered, with the expectation that we might after full reconsideration still find some differences remaining between the spheres of ministry of men and women. In the wider discussion, there should be no lines drawn among women on grounds of being married or single. Naturally at times the married woman may well be too much preoccupied for any ministry but that in her own home, but I am convinced that there are other times when the gifts of God to her there could be shared in a ministry in the Church.

Probably no book at this stage in a discussion could be completely satisfying. It is to be hoped, nevertheless, that Miss Thrall's book will be accepted in the spirit in which she offers it, and will stimulate others to join in the debate. We are in her debt for a courageous assault on an entrenched position.

*Bangalore*

E. M. HANSON

*Militant Here in Earth*: by Maurice B. Reckitt. Longmans, Green & Co. Pp. 160. Available at Orient Longmans Private Ltd., Calcutta. Price 9s. 6d. net.

For all who are concerned with the vital rôle that the Church should play in the regeneration of society this little book has a contribution to make by way of stimulating their thinking on the subject. The author attempts to make a realistic assessment of religious and moral conditions of life in the West in the post-war period and comes to the conclusion that 'we live now in a "post-Christian" age'. He also exposes the fallacies that dominate the culture of the neo-technic age in the West at the present time. The observations he makes on the Church in the process of his social analysis are such as would shatter self-complacency on the part of members of the Church who are able to discern the signs of the times.

The author's concern is to make Christians understand the true meaning of their Faith and its relevance to the conditions in which they live. Christianity being fundamentally a world-affirming religion, 'Christian humanism' according to the author 'is the only true humanism ; and a Christian society must be the only authentic and workable society' (p. 90). As those who live 'between the D-Day and the V-Day of the Christian dispensation' Christians are called upon to take the prophetic function of the Christian Church seriously and prove to the world that salvation has reference not only to the individual soul but also to society in which God's will is to be worked out. The essence of the Church's duty to man and society, the author thinks, may be expressed in Chesterton's words: 'we must somehow find a way of loving the world without trusting it'.

The book is somewhat rambling but is a challenging one.

Serampore

C. E. ABRAHAM

*The Vatican Revolution*: by Geddes MacGregor, Rufus Jones Professor of Philosophy and Religion, Bryn Mawr. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London. Pp. i-xiii + 1-210. 1958. Price 25s. net.

Not the least attractive feature of this book is the last section covering 58 pages and giving a series of appendices—one giving the text of the decrees of the Vatican Council (1870) in Latin with English translation and another a bibliography running into 13 pages. In the latter is provided a list of source books with notes and commentaries representing different points of view. It is well to make this point at the very beginning so that the unprejudiced reader may know that the author who happens to be a Protestant has attempted to give an objective assessment of the significance of a controversial subject in Church History.

The Vatican Council made history when it promulgated the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope. This event stands today as the Grand Canyon separating Roman Catholics from other Christians. The author deals with the subject from the point of view of an historian and points out an evidence that the decision was opposed by an influential, though not a numerically strong minority, notwithstanding political manœuvring and lobbying on the part of the supporters of Pope Pius IX. On the decision itself the author's comment is as follows: 'Whether the victory was a legal one within the constitution of the Roman Church itself is highly questionable. No effort was spared to make it appear legal. . . Success may be, like possession, nine-tenths of the law ; but it is not even one-tenth of the moral law' (p. 93).

One of the refreshing qualities of the book is that it is not written with an anti-Roman Catholic bias. The author is at pains to point out that in the Middle Ages there was a strong democratic tradition in the Church. While the idea of papal infallibility was popular in some quarters before the Reformation it was held in check by the principle of popular sovereignty, which the author claims, was an essential part of the medieval tradition. But this principle 'received its death blow', says the author, at the Vatican Council. In a chapter entitled 'The Flight from Democracy' the author traces carefully this history of the imposition of this doctrine on the Roman Church, in which the part played by Jesuits was not an insignificant one. The author's discussion of this historical development should prove of great interest and value to students concerned with ecumenical relations.

The book has done signal service to historical truth by the objective manner in which a crucial historical event is discussed. It deserves to be read widely so that cobwebs which cloud ecumenical understanding in the Christian Church may be removed. It should serve to bring illumination to many and a certain degree of heart-searching to not a few.

Serampore

C. E. ABRAHAM



## AN APOLOGY

Sister Carol Graham deeply regrets that at the end of her article on 'Women in the Indian Church', printed in the last number of *The Indian Journal of Theology*, she made some statements regarding the disabilities of women on account of physical impurity in the Orthodox Syrian Church which are incorrect. The information which she gave pertains to the Orthodox Church, for which she had chapter and verse, but not, it appears, to the Syrian branch of that Church. She offers her most sincere apologies for the mistake which did not appear in the first draft but was due to a subsequent mistake in typing.

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